

A PROPOSAL FOR ADOPTING A STANDARD COORDINATE SYSTEM FOR
DEFINING ATMOSPHERIC NOMENCLATURE FOR THE GIANT PLANETS

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Although the albedo of specific belts and zones varies as a function of time, there is evidence that wind maxima may be fixed in latitude. Before considering a standard notation for wind jets, it is necessary to establish a coordinate system within which the nomenclature would be defined. Traditionally, the BAA has used planetographic latitudes; however, this system is based not only on an accurate determination of the polar diameter but also on the assumption that the equipotential surfaces can be represented by biaxial ellipsoids.

The International Astronomical Union strives to adopt unambiguous nomenclature that will be universally acceptable. We propose that planetocentric coordinates be utilized and that a standardized value of the ratio of the polar diameter to the equatorial diameter be established for each planet to facilitate transformation into planetographic coordinates.

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